



Happy New Year ...

The New Year has always been a time for looking back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It's a time to reflect on the changes we want, or often need, if we're to have the motivation to move forward.

The following is something to think about as you make your New Year's Resolutions.

Attitude

I promise myself ...

*To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and expect only the best;
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person I meet;
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature I meet a smile;
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as I am about my own;
To look at the sunny side of everything and make my optimism come true;
To make all my friends feel that there is something good in them;
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future;
To give so much time to the improvement of myself that I have no time to criticize others;
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble,*

.... because my attitude is my life.



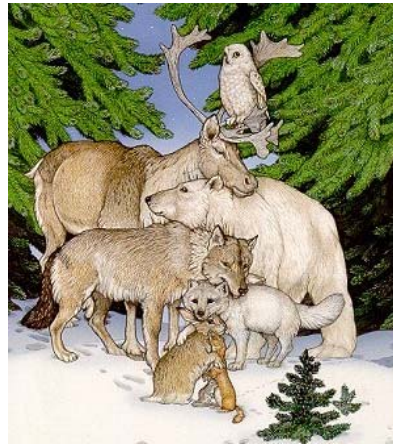
Wild Things

**AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGES ...**

*where wildlife
comes naturally!*

THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING

Explore the Wonders of Nature - Volunteer



Angels among us

Some say that volunteers are
angels without wings,
your thoughtful ways are gifts you bring
to Forsythe every day.

Some say there are no angels,
but we know that's not true,
because of all you do for us,
our angels lie in you!



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CHIEF'S CORNER

National Wildlife Refuge
System Chief
Geoffrey L. Haskett

Farewell and Thanks

As I pack to take my next assignment as the Regional Director in Alaska, I leave Washington, D.C., with real sadness - saying good-bye to so many enthusiastic, professional and fun people who work for and support the National Wildlife Refuge System. I am also leaving with real pride in the good things that have taken place over the two and a half years that I was Chief of the Refuge System.

We've seen the establishment of the bipartisan Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus, with 146 members representing 42 states and 228 national wildlife refuges. In October 2007, when we celebrated the 10th anniversary of enactment of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, the Capitol Hill room was overflowing with members of Congress, their aides and hundreds of our supporters and Friends. The room was so full that Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne could barely shoulder his way to the podium to deliver remarks.

We've seen a reinvigoration of our relationship with the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the growing strength of the 22-member CARE (Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement) organization. We have an ever more powerful Refuge Friends movement and a record number of Friends organizations. I wish I could be sure that I will attend the National Friends Conference in February 2009, but I know it will be an outstanding educational and networking event.

Public awareness of the Refuge System has grown as our public service announcement, with the tag line "Get Some Nature into Your Kids," airs on more than 345 commercial and cable television stations in about 170 media markets. People have become aware that the Refuge System is not just the world's preeminent system of public lands devoted to the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats, but also an economic engine in some communities. The Refuge System generated more than \$1.7 billion in economic benefits in 2006 and created about 27,000 jobs. Those facts got huge news coverage when we released them through our *Banking on Nature* report.

I've traveled all across the country during my time as Chief, and I've become acutely aware that none of this could have been done without the support of Refuge Friends and staff. It has been truly an honor to be the Chief of Refuges, and I plan to continue my support from Alaska.

CARE Calls for \$1 Billion for Refuge System "Shovel-Ready" Jobs

As Congress weighs priorities for expected economic-stimulus legislation, the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) is urging lawmakers to include \$1 billion for "green" jobs on national wildlife refuges. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could "put more than 18,000 people to work throughout the country on shovel-ready projects for habitat restoration in as few as 90 days," CARE said in a fact sheet it is now distributing to members of Congress. More specifically, CARE cited:

- \$504 million spent on energy efficiency, renewable energy and green buildings and other projects would support or create more than 11,000 jobs.

- \$443 million in habitat restoration and improvement, projects would support or create more than 6,600 community-based jobs.

"An investment of nearly \$1 billion in infrastructure and habitat restoration on national wildlife refuges will put people to work today and lay the foundation for tomorrow's greener and more efficient economy," according to CARE. "These projects will keep local construction, electrical, landscaping and other companies working throughout 2009. Moreover, they will prepare the next generation of American workers with the skills they need to lead a green revolution in our economy."

Separately, to help guide the new administration's first 100 days, a broad coalition of national environmental and conservation groups is urging the adoption of a Refuge Budget Initiative. The coalition argues that "the Refuge System needs \$765 million per year by FY 2013 to properly administer nearly 100 million acres." The group's proposed administrative actions include steps "to complete consistent and comparable basic inventories of refuge resources."

"We cannot do great deeds unless we are willing to do the small things that make up the sum of greatness. The welfare of each of us in dependent fundamentally upon the welfare of all of us. I preach the gospel of hope."

- President Theodore Roosevelt -

Dear refuge volunteers, Friends, interns, staff, and cooperators,

Congratulations and thank you all for a job well done! We banded 144 ducks this year on E.B. Forsythe NWR. This is a significant accomplishment in our preseason duck banding program.

A very special acknowledgment to refuge volunteer, McDuffy Barrow. "Duffy" consistently baited the Barnegat traps almost every night from mid-August through September. His effort was the key to the success of the Barnegat trap site. In fact, the Barnegat traps, yielded the most ducks, capturing 61 mallards (MALL) and 4 American black ducks (ABDU). Thank you, Duffy!

Three out of seven banding sites in the Brigantine Division captured 72 wood ducks (WODU), 6 MALL, 1 ABDU, and recaptured 10 WODU. Prior to tropical storm Hanna (Saturday, September 6), we were having good success capturing ducks on bait. After Hanna, hundreds of ABDU and MALL moved to the east end of the pools feeding on newly submerged *Eleocharis* sp. The availability of natural food source nearly tripled in one day.

Due to the growing concern of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) effecting the poultry industry and wild bird populations in North America, live bird and mortality surveillance efforts have increased on National Wildlife Refuges.

We collected a total of 80 combined oral-pharyngeal and cloacal swab samples from 75 WODU and 5 ABDU as part of the live bird surveillance. The samples were sent to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin for testing. You can keep track of AI surveillance at <http://wildlifedisease.nh.gov/ai/>

We are collaborating with the NJDEP/Division of Fish and Wildlife and USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services to collect cloacal and oropharyngeal swabs opportunistically from hunter-harvested waterfowl during the hunting season. We began collecting samples from hunter harvested waterfowl on opening day, November 1, 2008 and will end in January.

Thank you,
Kevin



Peter LaMacchia

From an Intern's Perspective

Charles Barreca



When I began at Edwin B. Forsythe in May, I wasn't 100% sure what my summer would entail. I had never gone too far out on a saltmarsh, only crashing thru Phragmite infested mudflats near my hometown in Keyport, NJ when I was a kid. Nor did I imagine I'd go thru a crash course of "hands-on" bird observation, monitoring and sampling.

Within the 1st few days of working at the refuge I was out at 5 AM doing marsh bird surveys with the other interns, amazed at the size and sounds of the natural salt marsh. Wildlife Drive was amazing in its size and diversity of birds, all the while with a blinking and buzzing Atlantic City on the horizon.

Soon I was full tilt into what I had been assigned to work on: invasive plant species management. Some days another invasive species intern and I would be hunting for patches of invasive *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed, often seen in roadside ditches and along saltmarshes), drawing lines around them in a game of reverse connect the dots using a portable GPS unit and a field notebook to record the size and density of the patch. We'd map in remote refuge locations such as Eno's Pond, Holgate and Little Beach, jumping drainage ditches and weaving thru tangles of poison ivy and laurel while brushing off greenhead flies. This valuable data would later be used with GIS and mapping applications to show where many of the patches are located, to help identify where invasive grasses like *Phragmites* are spreading, and where it's established. Other days I would be out spraying *Phragmites*, Chinese Bush Clover, Common Mullein, Spotted Knapweed and a variety of other invasive plants on the refuge using backpack sprayers and sometimes hand pulling methods.

Out of that and many other activities at the refuge, I took from it a strong sense of how important and complex it is to manage wildlife for the sake of the wildlife and people who utilize it. The fact such a refuge is in the backyard of one of the most densely populated states in the USA adds to the uniqueness, with issues of land use, public contact, pollution, invasive species and countless other issues making things stand out from more isolated refuge locations.

The Friends of Forsythe NWR is a non-profit group established in 1998 to provide support and services to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville, New Jersey. Our goals are:



- Promoting a better understanding of the natural history and environment of Southern New Jersey, the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR and the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Helping to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitat at this Refuge, and to assist the Refuge, the Refuge System and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a variety of educational and supportive efforts.

Please consider joining the Friends of Forsythe and help us accomplish these goals. Call 609-748-1535 or visit www.friendsofforsythe.org

Wherever Refuge Friends gather, innovation and enthusiasm thrive...

This coming February, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuge Association will host the 2009 National Wildlife Refuge System Friends Conference: Friends Unite!

A forum to energize Friends and build lasting relationships, this conference marks the fifth national gathering for Friends and Fish and Wildlife Service representatives to share new ideas and time-tested strategies with peers from around the country.

This conference could not come at a better time. 2009 will usher in a new Administration and Congress who will grapple with enormous conservation challenges in the upcoming years. Our national wildlife refuges are canaries in the coal mine when it comes to pressing issues like climate change, competition for water and combating invasive species. Fortunately, Friends have always risen to the occasion during hard times. The urgent issues facing refuges today will require all that Friends have to offer.

We chose the theme for the 2009 Friends Conference - Friends Unite! - to reflect the great need for committed wildlife and refuge supporters to come together and work toward our shared goal of securing America's wildlife heritage for future generations.

Be sure to join us at 7:00 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month as the Friends continue their on-going "Evening at Forsythe" series at refuge headquarters. The first lecture of 2009 will be titled "Global Warming, Up Close and Personal.."



More than anywhere else in the United States, Alaska has experienced widespread, adverse impacts from global warming. Join us in January as Dr. Ed Bristow talks about his personal experiences with some aspects of global warming. Visit some Arctic regions and their inhabitants and what such changes may have on those areas as the glaciers retreat.



Autumn has proved once again to be an interesting and busy time for members of our refuge-based photo club. The excitement of this landmark Presidential election was brought to the Forsythe NWR by a nationally recognized photojournalist, Sarah Glover, of

the Philadelphia Inquirer. Ms. Glover, first place winner of the National Press Photographers Association's "Best of Journalism 2005 Competition," dazzled her audience with her work as a reporter and photographer assigned to cover the campaign of President-elect Barack Obama. She also provided insight into the life of a photojournalist and the ethical and legal issues faced by photographers in the media.

At Summer's end, the club's vice-president organized the 2nd annual "September Challenge" in which contestants were assigned ten themes and given a precise one month time frame during which the photos had to be taken. This year's themes included: Perspective, Birds, Hardware, Red, Candles, Hairdos, Hands, Food, Non-facial Portraits, and Leaves. Winners were announced at December's Potluck Holiday Luncheon.

A brisk October Saturday found members waking up early for Make a Difference Day at the Refuge and to photograph the groundbreaking for the new Visitor Contact Center as well.

Congressman LoBiondo, was a guest of honor although his handsome Weimaraners received an equal amount of attention.

November marked the 5th annual Refuge Shootout Contest in which all photos must have been taken on a National Wildlife Refuge. This year the competition has been renamed the "Sally Rowland Memorial Refuge Shootout" in honor of our beloved treasurer and field trip coordinator who passed away earlier this year. Sally would have been proud of the many magnificent photos entered into a contest that now bears her name. Over 40 photos were entered. Seventy five percent of the entries were color prints and the other twenty five

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percent were black and whites. The dramatic shift nationwide to digital photography was evident in the fact that all entries submitted happened to be digital images.

The color print category awards were dominated by veteran photographers John Oesterling and James Meyers. John's "Blue Heron" took first place in the color print division as well as "Best in Show." John also garnered two honorable mentions in that category for his "Heron on a Post" and "Forsythe Meadow." James captured second and third place honors as well as an honorable mention for "King Bird" and "Bobolink" and "American Avocet. Club president Dennis Loughlin took first place honors with his photo of a stealthy egret entitled "Fishing without a License" and second place for his shot of a blue heron entitled "Still Life." Ann-Marie Morrison's "The Road to Gull Pond" took third place; and the honorable mention went to Dennis for "Patience", featuring a silhouetted shorebird waiting for his lunch. The club was fortunate to have three of the areas best professional photographers as judges: John Shields, Steve Schneiderman, and our first club president and co-founder, Denny Coleman. Results will soon be posted on our club website:
www.stayfocusedphotoclub.com.

Best In Show, "Blue Heron" by John Oesterling



Mmmm ... With an expression like that, you've got to wonder what he's thinking.

Email us your best one-liner. Staff will enjoy judging your responses and post them in our next newsletter. The best response will receive a prize.

You might be an Environmental Educator if ...

You think "hip" clothes are waders.

The decor in your home consists of rocks, pine cones, shells and lichens.

You read field guides more often than fiction.

Your garden contains "weeds" - Milkweed, Jewelweed, Ironweed ...

On walks outdoors you pick up things other people wouldn't touch.

You believe it's not just dirt, it's soil.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle is more than a phrase, it's a way of life.

You communicate with owls while perfectly sober.

While at a fine restaurant you analyze the origins of your dinner.

- from Connections,
 NAI Environmental
 Education Section
 Newsletter.



Looking Back ...

As Autumn leaves started to fall, and days grew shorter, Forsythe volunteers were busy planning and participating in several events.

In September, we got 'in touch with our inner sharks,' as we enjoyed this summer's *For Volunteers Only* field trip to the NJ Adventure Aquarium in Camden, NJ.



October was a busy month! Our Friday night walks and campfire sing-alongs to connect families with nature continued; and family walks and bike rides on Saturday mornings were added.



Next, we participated in the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's Alumni Legacy Fund Run/Walk. The event, titled "Choose to Lose....And Overcome Childhood and Adult Obesity" began with a 5K run/walk, followed by mini interactive health education symposiums. We discussed recreational opportunities at the refuge and stressed the importance of Connecting People with Nature. Volunteer, Barry Keefe, led the participants in a sing-along featuring cuts from our Centennial CD, "Songs of the System."

National Wildlife Refuge Week was "kicked off" with The Big Sit! at Gull Pond Tower, offering guided nature and birding walks throughout the week.



Congressman LoBiondo joined us as we broke ground for our new visitor contact station. Thereafter, we participated in a Make a Difference Day cleanup along the Wildlife Drive. Over 250 community-minded volunteers turned out on a rainy morning to clean up the refuge's 8-mile Wildlife Drive. School and church groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, neighbors, Friends, and members of several community organizations throughout the county walked the trails picking up waste and sorting it into trash and recycling bags. A total of over 5 tons was removed by the end of the day. The effort of all involved not only benefited the environment, but also served as a valuable lesson on the dangers of pollution. The project was jointly sponsored by the Refuge, Galloway Township and NJ's WaterWatch program at Richard Stockton College.

Also during the fall of 2008, Friends of Forsythe offered an Environmental Photo Geocaching workshop for children and their families that included an overview of ecological cycles, basic elements of photo composition, and the concepts of photo geocaching. Photo geocaching follows GPS navigational instructions to lead one to the CACHE, which in this case could either be a tree, building, birdhouse, etc. situated within the refuge. Photos were assembled by the participants into log books to document their study of the environment. The children were also encouraged to enter their photos in a photo contest. Participants received a free one year membership in the Friends of Forsythe and a tote bag to transport the materials while photo geocaching. *Everyone* that entered their photographs in the contest received a pair of binoculars as a prize.

The Service's many excellent environmental education programs are one important way to help children connect with nature; they are intended to bring learners from "awareness to action." Stewardship of natural resources is EE's ultimate goal. Opportunities for children to spend unstructured time in nature to create awareness is the first step towards this goal. The Friends plan to continue to offer Photo Geocaching workshops at Forsythe to support these goals.

Erin Kiefer

Though I maybe relatively new here at Forsythe, I can already see the immense success of our participation in the Atlantic City Teacher's Convention this fall. The Environmental Education Committee, with help from its President George Morgan and Forsythe employee Bob McCormack, made it possible for the refuge to reach more teachers than we ever thought we could.

Our main goal during the two-day convention (Nov. 6-7) was to get teachers to bring their students to Forsythe and experience the joy and wonder of nature. In these increasingly hard financial times, Forsythe allows teachers access to a completely free field trip (excluding costs for transportation). Many districts have cut field trips entirely from their budgets causing students to only be able to experience life within the brick walls of their classrooms. Forsythe gives them a new alternative. Not only are our trips free, they get children outside to experience the world hands-on. You would be amazed by the number of students (and teachers) who live in the area of the Refuge and are unaware that we even exist!

With overwhelming help from our volunteers, including present and retired N.J. school teachers and participants from Forsythe's Master Naturalist program, we were able to burst into the environmental education field trip scene. In a matter of two days our group was able to make contact with well over 1,200 school teachers, hand out almost 800 brochures detailing our available programs (thanks to the Friends), and collected over 140 contact e-mails.

Since the convention we have booked the entire first week of May along with two other dates in the middle of the month, including a group of over 375 fifth-grade students! Other teachers have also expressed interest in coming in late April. This opportunity may very well be a turning point in Forsythe's environmental education program. Who knows, someday soon we might book up the whole month of May! The more children we are able to touch, and teach, the better it is for all of us. *"Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."*-Anatole France

Josh Higgins



There aren't many people that know what goes on behind the scenes at a national wildlife refuge. I was one of those people before I got the chance to experience what so few people get to experience. I was lucky enough to have the honor to work for the refuge as a wildlife intern for the summer season though the fall and now into the winter.

Wildlife Biologist Vinny Turner gave me the opportunity I was hoping for when he hired me as a piping plover intern. When describing the job, Vinny emphasized not only the long hot days and the nasty green-head flies, but also touched base on the good parts of the job, such as working with a bird that not many people know about. Turns out the flies and the hot days are the last thing I think about when I look back at what I have done while working on the refuge. A majority of my time this summer was spent working with the elusive piping plover, nest searches and data collection were a good portion of my day, but that wasn't all. The best part of my experience was that I wasn't limited to just plover work; I got to experience the many aspects of refuge duties and management techniques. These different tasks were mainly hands on, and tasks that many people never get the chance to experience. Other things I didn't expect were osprey banding, Canada goose/mute swan round-up, pre-season duck banding, avian influenza testing, airboat duck surveys, participating in the salt marsh integrity project, and educating the public on what I have learned about the piping plover were all an added bonus. This opportunity gave me the chance to meet new people beyond the friendly refuge staff as I did some work with New Jersey Fish and Game and other private organizations throughout the state.

My experience working at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge has been a positive one for me. I didn't know what to expect when I joined the refuge staff, but the transition was easy. The group of workers here made my experience fun and very educational. This experience at Forsythe has made me want to continue to learn environmental practices that will eventually lead me to being a well rounded, knowledgeable wildlife biologist.



George Morgan, Bob McCormack, Dave Blood, Erin Kiefer and Debbie Conrad

HOLIDAY WISHES

May your holidays be blessed
with family and friends,
may peace and love
fill your soul.

May your fondest memories
fill your heart,
and
may all you that you wish for
come true.



from all of us
at the refuge

WHO'S ON STAFF?

Project Leader
Steve Atzert

Deputy Project Leader
Brian Braudis

Chief of Visitor Services
Art Webster

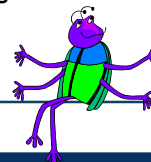
Wildlife Biologists
Vinny Turner
Kevin Holcomb

Refuge Law Enforcement Officer
Chris Pancila

Administrative Officer
Martha Hand

Volunteer Coordinator
Sandy Perchetti

Maintenance Professionals
Tom Holdsworth
Roger Dutch



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THE NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING